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24 February 1961

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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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24 February 1961

## DAILY BRIEF

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Laos: A Pravda article of 23 February, the first authoritative commentary in over a month on Moscow's conditions for reaching a settlement in Laos, stressed the need to convene an international conference before the International Control Commission resumes its activity in Laos. Carefully avoiding direct criticism of present US policy in Laos, the article reiterated the USSR's contention that any such commission could deal only with Souvanna Phouma since the King of Laos did not have executive authority. Communist China's foreign minister on 22 February became the first bloc spokesman to attack the neutral nations proposal publicly. Chen Yi termed the plan the "start of a new US scheme. . .so that it can conveniently perpetuate its aggression and interference in Laos."

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Sudan: Opposition to the Abboud regime's pro-UN stand in the Congo appears to be forcing the government into negotiations with the group of politicians which has been pressing for

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25X1 [a return to civilian government in the Sudan. Public reaction to Lumumba's death, which at first took the form of small pro-Lumumba street demonstrations, has assumed an antigovernment character. Although the government believes the demonstrations were planned by the Sudanese Communist party and pro-UAR elements, it apparently fears that basically conservative civilian politicians will use the disorders to try to bring down the military regime.]

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DAILY BRIEF

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Communist Bloc Reaction to Laotian King's Declaration  
Of 19 February

The initial reaction of Communist bloc governments to King Savang's declaration of 19 February suggests concern lest the King's move deprive them of the diplomatic initiative in the Laotian crisis and make it more difficult for them to insist that any settlement be based on the 1954 Geneva agreements. Following broadcasts by Hanoi, Peiping, and Moscow of Souphannouvong's bitter denunciation of the neutral nations commission proposal, Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chen Yi, in a speech on 22 February, said the US had declared its support for Savang's proposal and he attacked this as the beginning of an American "scheme" to "bury" the Geneva accords and perpetuate US "aggression and interference" in Laos.

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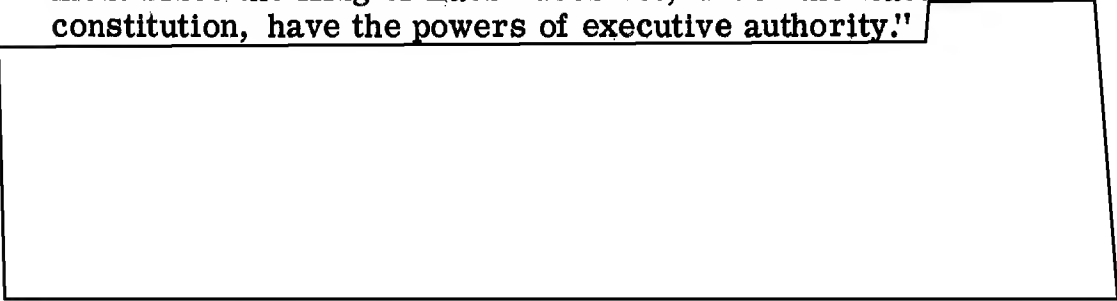
The bloc's insistence that any Laotian negotiation or settlement be based on the 1954 agreements stems from its conviction that this approach would guarantee a major bloc voice in any solution and provide the best device for obtaining strong Pathet Lao participation in any expanded government of "national unity" that might be recommended by an international conference. In his remarks on Wednesday, Chen Yi took the position that the "sole, correct way to peacefully solve the Laotian question and to ensure the peace and neutrality of Laos lies in convening an enlarged Geneva conference, as proposed by Prince Sihanouk, with the Geneva agreements as its basis..." He also renewed the call for reactivation of the ICC in Laos and recognition of "the lawful government of Laos headed by Prince Phouma."

Pravda, in an article yesterday, commented obliquely on King Savang's declaration by charging that the Boun Oum government is "flouting the Geneva agreements, which provide the only

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foundation for peace and security in the Indochina area." The article claimed that the USSR's proposals for dealing with the crisis have "met with widespread international response," and contended that Britain, which together with the USSR co-chaired the 1954 Geneva Conference, has agreed in principle that any settlement should be based on the Geneva agreements. Pravda also welcomed Britain's proposal of 21 January for re-activating the ICC in Laos as a "move toward a realistic approach." The article went even further than Moscow's official reply of 18 February to the British proposal by saying that the ICC "must meet at once." It repeated, however, the standard position that the ICC must have new instructions and authority to deal with the present situation, that only an international conference could provide these, and that the ICC must deal only with Souvanna Phouma as head of the lawful government since the King of Laos "does not, under the Laotian constitution, have the powers of executive authority."



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Sudanese Government Considering Concessions  
To Opposition Group

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[The Sudanese military regime ignored a petition presented last November by a coalition of politicians calling for a return to civilian government. Since then the leaders of this group have been touring the provinces attempting to win support, but they have lacked a clear-cut issue with which to arouse public enthusiasm. Government leaders, concerned over the appearance of antiregime slogans in the pro-Lumumba demonstrations, apparently now are willing to consider concessions to the opposition group in hopes of bolstering their popularity.]

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[Although the coalition group includes Communist and pro-UAR elements, it is predominantly conservative. If included in the Sudanese Government, therefore, it would not be likely to press for a change in the Sudan's policy toward the UN in the Congo.]

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